



Critical Thinking Oriented Teaching Reform of Business English Translation

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Abstract

Business English Translation is a major course of Business English. Under the background of “New Liberal Arts”, how to highlight the characteristics of deep integration of language knowledge and business discipline? How to transform traditional language and skill-based courses into critical thinking-oriented courses based on business knowledge? How to change from teacher-centered to student-centered? This paper will discuss the feasibility of cultivating students’ critical thinking in this course from teaching objective, teaching content, teaching method, and teaching assessment.

Key words: Critical thinking; Business English translation; Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

The launch of the “Six Excellences and One Top” Program 2.0 of the Ministry of Education (Six Excellences: Excellent Engineer/Doctor/Agriculture and Forestry

Talents/Teacher/Law Talent/News Communication Talent Education and Training Program 2.0; One Top: Top Talents in Basic Discipline Training Program 2.0) led to the comprehensive construction of the New Liberal Arts. Compared with the traditional liberal arts, information technology has profoundly changed the way of studying in liberal arts. The New Liberal Arts advocates the integration within arts and between arts and sciences. Business English itself is an interdiscipline of language and business. With the changes in social needs in the new era, the ability requirements of Business English talents have also changed accordingly.

The *National Criterion of Teaching Quality of University BA Program in Business English* has pointed the direction for the training of Business English talents. What we want to cultivate is “...versatile and practical talents with abilities of English application, business practice, cross-cultural communication, critical thinking and innovation, independent learning, and capable of engaging in international business work.” One of the five abilities required for English majors is critical thinking, the beginning of innovation.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW OF CRITICAL THINKING

One major kind of foreign study of critical thinking is the definition of critical thinking and the development of critical thinking inventory. The other is the influence of teaching on the cultivation of critical thinking. In terms of the definition of critical thinking and the development of critical thinking inventory, the most influential is the Delphi Two-dimensional Model proposed by the Delphi Project, and the Three-dimensional Model proposed by Richard Paul and Linda Elder. Based on the previous research, these two models have a relatively comprehensive definition of the connotation and extension of critical thinking. In terms of the influence

of teaching on the cultivation of critical thinking, most foreign scholars carried out empirical research. The findings are: interdisciplinary courses or courses emphasizing disciplinary integration are very helpful to the development of critical thinking. The influence of the course on college students' critical thinking is influenced by teachers' teaching and universities. The university as a whole has a great influence on the critical thinking of students. If the teacher adopts appropriate teaching methods or models and selects appropriate teaching content, the student's critical thinking ability will be improved. (Yao, 2001, p.21)

Domestic foreign language educators are paying more and more attention to the cultivation of the critical thinking ability of English majors in China, and the research on critical thinking is also on the rise. In 1998, Huang Yuanshen pointed out in *Critical Thinking Absence* that the foreign language majors are prone to suffer from "critical thinking absence" and lack the ability to analyze, synthesize, judge, reason, think and discriminate. In 2010, when Huang Yuanshen talked about "critical thinking absence" again, he pointed out that "if the absence of critical thinking were not improved, it would be difficult for English majors to cultivate creative talents." Domestic research can be divided into the following categories: review of study at home and abroad on critical thinking ability, theoretical framework of critical thinking and the development of critical thinking inventory, English major curriculum design for the cultivation of critical thinking, research on the training mode of critical thinking ability, and critical thinking-oriented teaching reform of English major courses.

Through summarizing the study on critical thinking at home and abroad, we can find that the theoretical framework of critical thinking at home and abroad has been relatively mature, and the research on critical thinking has gradually changed from theory to application. People are increasingly aware that the traditional teacher-centered teaching model will limit the development of students' critical thinking. It is necessary to incorporate critical thinking into curriculum reform, and explore operationally feasible implementation plans.

2. THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING CRITICAL THINKING IN BUSINESS ENGLISH TRANSLATION

What is critical thinking ability? Critical thinking ability refers to: diligent learning, believing in reason, respecting facts, cautious judgment, impartial evaluation, sensitive to inquiry, and persevering in pursuing truth. At the level of cognitive skills, critical thinking ability refers to the ability to elaborate, analyze, evaluate, reason and interpret elements such as evidence, concepts, methods, standards, and backgrounds. (Sun, 2015, p.22)

As a major course of Business English, Business English Translation is one of the most effective courses that combines language skills with subject content, and can best train students to think independently and to make discerning choices. However, traditional Business English Translation teaching does not fully play the functions of this course. On the one hand, teachers' understanding of Business English Translation is not deep enough, putting translation and business knowledge together at the surface level, distinctively in the selection of business materials. Classroom teaching is still dominated by teachers, with theoretical introductions - example analysis - classroom exercises - teacher commentary as a teaching process. On the other hand, students lack of initiative in the exploration of translation skills, the expansion of business knowledge, the motivation to solve problems. More attention is put on the reference and language level. This is less helpful for the improvement of translation, business knowledge, and critical thinking ability.

Translation is a cognitive activity, which can make up for the shortcomings of the traditional view that translation is only regarded as "language conversion". (Wang, 2017, p.5) Thinking and reasoning are two complex cognitive activities of human beings. Thinking is inseparable from language, and vice versa. This means that thinking is always based on a certain language consciousness, and translation depends on the translator's thinking activities. (Yan, 2008, p.96) The translator has a strong feature of critical thinking, from reading, listening to expressing. Logical analysis and choice of critical thinking run throughout the whole translation process. (Liu and Wang, 2015, p.45) In order to cultivate students' critical thinking ability, teachers should re-orient the teaching of the course in combination with the professionalism and critical thinking feature of Business English Translation. The following will explore how to promote the teaching reform of Business English Translation and improve students' critical thinking ability from teaching objective, teaching content, teaching method, and teaching assessment.

3. CRITICAL THINKING-ORIENTED REFORM OF BUSINESS ENGLISH TRANSLATION

3.1 Reform of the Teaching Objective of Business English Translation

The common Business English Translation teaching objective is to enable students to master basic business translation theories and commonly used translation methods and techniques, and to develop students' translation skills through repeated practice. This kind of teaching objective pays more attention to the cultivation of language skills, neglecting the integration of business knowledge, and the cultivation of students'

critical thinking ability. Business English Translation is an integration of language and business knowledge. Teaching objective should consider how to make the course practical by improving students' critical thinking ability. Therefore, in addition to understanding the basic teaching objectives such as the differences between English and Chinese, the basic theoretical knowledge and translation methods of Business English Translation, students should be able to independently analyze business materials including author's emotion, writing style, as well as differences in source language and target language. Students should accurately analyze and reason the source language structure according to the individual's knowledge so as to improve the faithfulness of translation. Moreover, students should be able to proofread their own translation, and make reasonable evaluation of various translation versions. They can develop the ability of asking, analyzing, and solving problems in translation and business expertise, so as to achieve improvement in language skills, business knowledge, and critical thinking.

3.2 Reform of the Teaching Content of Business English Translation

As an interdisciplinary course of language and business, Business English Translation should make full use of the extensiveness, professionalism and practicality of business knowledge to give effective translation teaching. Content-based teaching combines language teaching with subject knowledge. On the basis of improving students' business knowledge and cognitive ability, it promotes the continuous improvement of language level and the updating of knowledge structure. Based on the basic training of traditional translation principles and translation techniques, a wide range of business themes and genres can be introduced. At present, most Business English Translation textbooks on the market arrange textbook content by business texts, such as business letters, advertisements, letters of credit, business contracts, product instruction, etc. But the downside is that this is simply a combination of language and business. Students do not understand the professional knowledge and connotation behind the business materials, and the quality of the translation was very poor.

Therefore, how teachers effectively use business content for language teaching is the key to reform. On the one hand, the interactive classroom guides students to identify the characteristics of business styles, and distinguish the differences in lexicon and syntax, styles, and discourse structures. On the other hand, students are encouraged to take the initiative to understand the basic professional knowledge of business material, such as international economics, finance, trade, marketing, and law. This not only helps students to accurately analyze the syntactic structure and semantic relationship of materials, improve the quality of translation, but also helps to improve students' professional quality and better adapt to

job requirements. At the same time, students are required to pay attention to business news of the Wall Street Journal, China Daily, the Economist, get to know the real-time business dynamics, which can enrich students' language expression and accumulate business knowledge, thus improving students' practical ability in Business English Translation.

3.3 Reform of the Teaching Method of Business English Translation

Whether the teaching method is appropriate or not determines the effect of the teaching content, and also affects the acceptance of the students. The teaching objective of Business English Translation is to improve students' English language competence and critical thinking ability through the integration of language and business knowledge. In order to change the teacher-centered model of traditional teaching, teaching can be student-centered by designing inspiration, inquiry, and discussion activities, and develop students' critical thinking ability in such activities.

Taking the translation of letters of credit in Business English Translation as an example, this topic is very professional with many unfamiliar terms and complicated process. It is very difficult for students to translate without experiences. Therefore, set up group tasks before class, and guide students to understand the basic knowledge of letters of credit through question inspiration and group inquiry, such as what is a letter of credit? What are the parties to the letter of credit? What is the process of the letter of credit? Then at the beginning of the course, ask the group to present their understanding. This process is not only a basic understanding of business knowledge, but also cultivates students' ability to identify information, analyze and classify ideas. Moreover, translation is an output, and the premise of the output is a large amount of input. Such pre-class thinking and in-class presentations can prepare students for translation.

In addition, there is less discussion in the traditional Business English Translation classroom, but the speaking-practice-review routine. In fact, discussion is a teaching method that can fully develop students' critical thinking ability. It can be a discussion of the choice of translation methods, or a discussion of translation analysis, even a discussion of the content of business materials. In the discussion, students can be guided to pay attention to the development and logic of the material, to avoid low readability by logical errors in the translation. In the evaluation of different translation versions, through the analysis and evaluation of the translation, the students' critical thinking ability is trained to deepen the understanding of business materials and translation methods.

3.4 Reform of the Teaching Assessment of

Business English Translation

Traditional Business English Translation often uses the summative assessment of daily performance + scores of final exam. As a course with strong combination of theory and practice, it should embody the formative assessment oriented by the cultivation of critical thinking. For example, the presentation of business knowledge, translation review, and review of different translation versions can be scored by peer review, self-evaluation, and teacher review from the perspective of content, language logic, and presentation forms. The completion of the student's in-class translation tasks and the participation in the discussion are also included in the assessment. Therefore, the final score is a more scientific assessment of the students' comprehensive ability. This allows students to actively activate their thinking in activities, improve language skills in practice, learn business knowledge, master learning methods, and develop critical thinking skills.

CONCLUSION

The critical thinking-oriented teaching reform of the Business English Translation adapts to the needs of talent cultivation in the new era. The reform of teaching objective, teaching content, teaching method, and teaching assessment will be conducive to cultivate high-quality versatile and practical Business English talents.

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